

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions of the indicated paragraphs in the specification:

[0021] The present invention is also suitable for use in suspension assemblies 32, as shown in Figure 2. The suspension assembly 32 includes a hollow axle 33 for supporting suspension components such as a leaf spring 38. A portion of the axle 33 may be locally reinforced as described above relative to Figures 1A-1F to provide additional structural stiffness. The hole may be closed by a cap 34 having a locating feature 35 such as a protrusion extending therefrom. A bracket 36 supporting the leaf spring 38 may have a feature complimentary to that of the locating feature on the cap ~~38-34~~ to locate the suspension assembly 32 relative to the axle 33 during assembly. The ~~racket-bracket~~ 36 is secured to the axle 33 by a U-bolt assembly 40, as is well known in the art. One of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that components other than the leaf spring 38 described above may be secured to the hollow axle 33 or any other hollow member. For example, an air spring or any other component that typically exerts a large load on the axle 33 ~~may~~ may be ~~placed~~ placed in the reinforced area. In the case of an axle, the hollow axle 33 is typically subject to buckling under the clamping load or walking of the suspension assembly 32 relative to the axle. With the locally reinforced hollow structure of the present invention, increased stiffness is provided thereby avoiding buckling or walking of the suspension assembly.